

**REMARKS**

Claims 6, 13, 15, and 19 have been previously canceled. Claims 1, 8, 14, 20, and 21 have been amended. Claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21 remain in the application. A marked up copy of the amended paragraphs of the Specification and amended claims are attached hereto as Appendix A.

Attached to this Amendment is a copy of the corrected drawing for FIG. 5. It is respectfully submitted that the attached corrected drawing is acceptable.

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) because the latch engaging the striker when the drawer is in the closed position is unclear and must be shown or the feature canceled from the claims. Applicants respectfully traverse these objections.

FIG. 9 shows the striker attached to the bumper and the latch attached to a rearward end of the drawer. Clearly, these two components engage each other when the drawer is in the closed position. Since these components are conventional, one skilled in the art would know what the two look like when engaged. As such, there is no need for a drawing illustrating the latch engaging the striker when the drawer is in the closed position. Although Applicants disagree with the Examiner that the latch engaging the striker must be shown, to further prosecution of the application, attached to this Amendment is a copy of a drawing for a proposed FIG. 12 for the Examiner's approval. Formal drawings will be submitted once the application has been allowed. It is respectfully submitted that the attached drawing overcomes the objection and is acceptable.

The disclosure was objected to because of an informality in paragraph [0027] on page 6 thereof.

The Specification has been amended on page 6, in paragraph [0027], to correct the informality as suggested by the Examiner on page 3 of the Office Action. It is respectfully submitted that the Specification, as amended, overcomes the objection.


Claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 1, 8, 14, 20, and 21 have been amended to clarify that the latch is connected to the rearward longitudinal end of the drawer. These claims have also been amended to clarify the vehicle structure. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21, as amended, overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph, as set forth in the Office Action.

Accordingly, claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21 have been amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 through 5, 7 through 12, 14, 16 through 18, 20, and 21 are in a condition for allowance, which allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Daniel H. Bliss  
Reg. No. 32,398

BLISS McGLYNN, P.C.  
2075 W. Big Beaver Road, Suite 600  
Troy, Michigan 48084  
(248) 649-6090

Date: August 6, 2002

Attorney Docket No.: 0693.00250  
Ford Disclosure No.: 200-0729

**APPENDIX A****VERSION OF THE SPECIFICATION AND CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW  
THE CHANGES**

Please amend paragraph [0027] on page 6 of the Specification as follows:

As illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9, the integrated extendable load floor assembly 10 includes a latch mechanism, generally indicated at 62, to latch the drawer 34 in a closed position relative to the rear end 16 of the vehicle 12. The latch mechanism 62 includes a striker 64 attached by suitable means such as a bracket 66 to a rear bumper 68 [on] adjacent the floor 20 of the rear end 16. The bracket 66 is attached to the rear bumper 68 by suitable means such as fasteners 67 or welding. The latch mechanism 62 also includes a latch 70 attached by suitable means such as fasteners (not shown) to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end 72 of the bottom [26] 36 of the drawer 34 for engaging and disengaging the striker 64. The latch mechanism 62 includes a movable handle 74 for actuating the latch 70 to release the striker 64 to move the drawer [60] 34 from a closed position adjacent to the rear end 16 of the vehicle 12 to an open position spaced longitudinally away from the rear end 16 of the vehicle 12. It should be appreciated that the striker 64 and latch 70 are conventional and known in the art.

Please amend claims 1, 8, 14, 20, and 21 as follows:

1. (THRICE AMENDED)     An integrated extendable load floor assembly for a vehicle having a rear end with a floor and sides extending upwardly and along the floor to form a

cargo area and a decklid for closing an upper portion of the cargo area, said integrated extendable load floor assembly comprising:

a plurality of rails adapted to be disposed upon the sides above the floor of the rear end;

a load floor operatively cooperating with said rails for sliding movement therealong and to close a longitudinal end of the cargo area; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the rear end of the vehicle [structure] adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within the cargo area.

8. (TWICE AMENDED) An integrated extendable load floor assembly for a vehicle having a rear storage area with a longitudinal open end comprising:

at least one rail adapted to be disposed upon a side of the rear storage area;

a load floor cooperating with said at least one rail allowing for a selective sliding movement in and out of the rear storage area of the vehicle and to close the longitudinal open end of the rear storage area; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the rear storage area of the vehicle [structure] adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within the rear storage area, said load floor latching mechanism including a movable handle disposed on said load floor.

14. (THRICE AMENDED) A vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a rear storage area having a longitudinal open end;

a decklid pivotally secured to said rear end to cover said rear storage area in a closed position and to allow access to said rear storage area in an open position; and

an integrated extendable load floor assembly cooperating with said rear storage area, said integrated extendable load floor assembly including at least one rail disposed upon each of said sides of said rear storage area and a load floor cooperating with said at least one rail, said load floor having selective sliding movement in and out of said rear storage area of the vehicle and to close said open end of said rear storage area and a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle [structure] adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said rear storage area.

20. (THRICE AMENDED) An automotive vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a cargo area;

a plurality of rails spaced laterally and extending longitudinally between said sides above said floor;

a load floor operatively cooperating with said rails for sliding movement therealong;

a decklid pivotally secured to said sides to cover said cargo area in a closed position and to allow access to said cargo area in an open position and to allow said load floor to be extended when said decklid is in said open position;

an endgate pivotally connected to said load floor and having a closed upright position and an open horizontal position;

an endgate latching mechanism that latches said endgate in said upright closed position; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle [structure] adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said rear storage area.

21. (THRICE AMENDED) A sedan type automotive vehicle comprising:

a body including a rear end having a floor and sides extending upwardly and along said floor to form a cargo area;

a load floor for sliding movement in and out of said cargo area;

an endgate pivotally connected to said load floor and having a closed upright position and an open horizontal position;

a decklid pivotally secured to said sides and cooperating with said endgate to cover said cargo area in a closed position and to allow access to said cargo area in an open position and to allow objects to be removed from said cargo area when said decklid is in said open position; and

a load floor latching mechanism comprising a striker and a latch connected to a [forward] rearward longitudinal end of said load floor and the body of the vehicle [structure] adapted to latch said load floor in a closed position within said cargo area.